

## SENATORS TO PROD JOHNSON ON RUSK

Committee to Ask President  
to Arrange for Testimony

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WASHINGTON, Feb. 7.—The Senate Foreign Relations Committee decided today to take its long-standing differences with Secretary of State Dean Rusk over public hearings on Vietnam policy to President Johnson.

By an 8-4 vote, the committee decided to request President Johnson to arrange for public testimony by Mr. Rusk on the Administration's Vietnam policy. For the last year, Mr. Rusk has repeatedly declined invitations from the committee chairman, Senator J. W. Fulbright of Arkansas, to testify in public session on Vietnam.

The vote came on a motion offered by Senator Karl E. Mundt, Republican of South Dakota, who switched his position on the issue of inviting Mr. Rusk for public testimony.

A past supporter of the Administration's Vietnam policy, Senator Mundt, along with other administration supporters within the committee, had taken the position that the committee should not attempt to force Mr. Rusk to appear in public session.

Senator Mundt changed his position, however, after the White House arranged for Mr. Rusk to appear last Sunday on the "Meet the Press" television program, during which he answered many questions about Vietnam. His argument was that a public hearing by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was "a more legitimate forum" than a television program for the exploration of administration policies in Vietnam.

Furthermore, in a position coinciding closely with that of Administration critics, Senator Mundt suggested that the time had come for the Administration to present the committee with a "clear-cut, succinct, consistent statement on why this war is essential to the security of the United States."

At the suggestion of Senator Albert Gore, Democrat of Tennessee, the Mundt motion was amended to provide that the invitation be extended through the President rather than directly to Mr. Rusk. The drafting of the letter to the President was left by the committee to Senator Fulbright.

It was Senator Gore's contention that it would be "demeaning" for the committee to direct still another invitation to the Secretary of State in view of his rejection of the earlier ones. Furthermore, by directing the invitation to the President, Senator Gore argued, the committee would more directly join the underlying constitutional issue of the proper relationship between the Presidency and the Senate in the formulation of foreign policy.

In a Senate speech after the committee's action, Senator Gore maintained that the committee had a "constitutional obligation" under its mandate in the Constitution to give "advice and consent" on foreign policy, to undertake a public policy discussion of Vietnam. Officials of the executive branch have a responsibility to testify before the committee in public session, he said.